DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 270 809 CS 209 908

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TITLE The "Oklahoma Eagle": A Study of Black Press Survival.
PUB DATE Aug 86
NOTE 18p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (69th, Norman, OK, August 3-6, 1986).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Black Businesses; Black Employment; Journalism; *Newspapers; Publications; Publishing Industry
IDENTIFIERS Family Owned Businesses; *Goodwin (Edward Lawrence); Journalism History; News Reporters; *Oklahoma Eagle

ABSTRACT

Analyzing the history of the "Oklahoma Eagle" provides insight into the problems and the opportunities involved in operating a black newspaper and reveals the factors responsible for the paper's longevity. The paper has been owned and operated by members of the Edward Lawrence Goodwin family since 1938 and has been staffed by excellent journalists over the course of the years. A review of copies of the "Eagle" from the last 9 years reveals a number of consistencies. The paper was normally neat and well edited, and contained many ads, particularly in the 1970s. Generally, the paper provided significant news. A member of the Goodwin family listed five factors that have enabled the paper to survive: (1) quality staff; (2) advertising success; (3) size of community; (4) sound relations with the community; and (5) family commitment. Eight years have passed since the death of E. L. Goodwin, and the family-owners have undertaken changes, but they have yet to find solid management footing. The problems of the "Eagle" are typical of the Black press today, and other papers may benefit from the "Eagle's" experience. (DF)

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The *Oklahoma Eagle*: A Study of Black Press Survival

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The author expresses appreciation to Jeanne Goodwin Arradondo, who provided information for this study from her private collection.

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The *Oklahoma Eagle*: A Study of Black Press Survival

When Thursday comes to Tulsa, so does the *Oklahoma Eagle*. It has been that way for about 68 years. The news has changed, but for readers in Tulsa, and subscribers throughout the nation and world, the *Eagle* has remained a source of news, gossip, social and church notes, sports reports, editorials, and reader response in letters. Since a 1921 race riot topics in the *Eagle* have changed from rebuilding to considering the possibility of integration, adjusting to a mood of black radicalism, and maintaining a sense of community while urban renewal scattered black residents.

While the black press has appeared to be near extinction for three decades, local papers, such as the Eagle, have quietly carried on. Yet the title of a 1950 article, "The Vanishing Negro Press[1]," symbolizes the dominant theme of discussion on the black press in recent years. Indeed, the facts and figures have been grim. In addition to problems faced by all newspapers, such as competition from the electronic media and the increasing cost of paper and other supplies, the black press has had other jolts. A decline in readers and loss of talented staff members came in the early 60's as civil rights gains led to greater coverage of black news in white dailies, and the hiring of some personnel from the black press.[2] Later in the decade, the militant press caused a revival in publishing,[3] but the resurgence ceased by the mid-70's.

Recent indications suggest that the black press is showing some resilience. A 1984 U.S. News and World Report [4] article said that the ethnic press in the nation is growing, with the black press being the largest group. With 161 newspapers and a total circulation of about 4.5 million it was more than five times larger than the second largest group. This article and another[5] referred to a five-year study by Dr. James Tinney of Howard University, in which he indicated that there are more black papers than are commonly reported. He estimated that there are over 320 black papers.

Although reporting methods by differing sources cause some variance, an indication of the number of black newspapers is provided in Table 1.

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[1]Wolseley, Roland E. "The Vanishing Negro Press," Negro Digest, December 1950, 9,2.

[2]"Victims of Negro Progress," *Newsweek*. August 26, 1963.

[3]"Playing It Cool," Time, July 28,1967.

[4]Thornton, Jeannye with Melody Harris, "Why Ethnic Press is Alive and Growing," U.S. News and World Report, October 29,1984, 97, 79-80.

[5]"Prof's Research Uncovers Many Black Newspapers," Jet, April 8,1985, 68, p.24.

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TABLE 1: Black Newspaper Frequencies by Years

Year	Number of Papers	Source
1939	152	Ayer[6]
1958	170	Ayer
1962	131	Ayer
1966	170	Ayer
1969	158	Ayer
1971	225	Ayer
1972	208	LaBrie [7]
1985	164	Ed. & Pub. [8]

This research is a descriptive study of black press survival as presented through a case study of one newspaper. The *Oklahoma Eagle* represents the type of weekly newspaper that serves a community, even a region, while sometimes going uncounted nationally. Although it is listed in the 1985 Editor and Publisher Yearbook, it is not listed in Ayer's American Newspaper Annual and Directory after 1983. The guiding research question is: What are the factors that have allowed the *Oklahoma Eagle* to survive? The method of historical research was used to look at the paper's past. In addition to a review of the literature on the paper and a study of back issues, interviews were conducted with many who have been involved with the paper.

The literature on the black press includes little research on the business of the press. The literature could be divided into six categories. Authors such as Brooks[9] and Oak[10] surveyed the black press by focusing on

[6]Ayer and Son's Directory, Philadelphia, years as indicated.

[7]LaBrie, Henry G. III, ed. The Black Press in America: A Guide (Third Edition) Harvard University, 1973.

[8]Editor and Publisher Yearbook. New York, 1985.

[9]Brooks, Maxwell R. The Negro Press Reexamined, Boston: Christopher Press, 1959.

[10]Oak, Vishnu V. The Negro Newspaper. Westport, Conn.: Negro Universities Press, 1948.

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several of the largest newspapers. Dann,[11] Penn,[12] and Detweiler[13] looked at the general black press, but their works were on particular periods or they are dated. Wolseley[14] and LaBrie[15] present more recent studies of the press. Regional and state studies have been undertaken to increase the information on the numbers and histories of papers in particular areas. These include dissertations by Pride,[16] Slaven,[17] Grouse,[18] and Brown,[19] theses by Moten[20] and Moses,[21] and a book by Suggs.[22]

Biographies and autobiographies of leading journalists of black newspapers offer insight on the history ond operations of the black press.

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[11]Dann, Martin E. The Black Press, 1827-1890. New York: Columbia University Press, 1971.

[12]Penn, I. Garland. Afro-American Press and Its Editors. New York: Arno Press, 1969, originally 1891.

[13]Detweiler, Frederick G. The Negro Press in the United States, College Park, Maryland: McGrath, 1922.

[14]Wolseley, Roland R. The Black Press, USA. Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1971.

[15]LaBrie, Henry G. III,ed. Perspectives on the Black Press:1974. Kennebunkport, Maine: Mercer House Press, 1974.

[16]Pride, Armistead S. " A Register and History of Negro Newspapers in the United States," (dissertation, Northwestern University, 1950).

[17]Slaven, George Everett. "A History of the Missouri Negro Press," (dissertation, University of Missouri, 1969).

[18]Grouse, Charles William. "Black Newspapers in Texas 1868 - 1970," (dissertation, The University of Texas at Austin, 1972).

[19]Brown, Karen F. "The Black Press of Tennessee: 1865 - 1980," (dissertation, University of Tennessee-Knoxville, 1982).

[20]Moten, Rashey B. "The Negro Press of Kansas," (thesis, University of Kansas, 1938).

[21]Moses, Bernadine. "An Historical and Analytical View of Black Newspapers in North Carolina," (thesis, University of North Carolina, 1976).

[22]Suggs, Henry Lewis, ed. The Black Press in the South, 1865-1979. Westport, Conn. and London: Greenwood Press, 1983.

These include works by Duster,[23] Fox,[24] Thornbrough[25] and Ottley[26] Finally there are also studies of particular issues, newspapers or news organizations. Ammons, Dimmick and Pilotta's[27] study of crime news reporting, and Seeman's[28] look at the Chicago Defender are examples.

Several works in the literature touch on the business of the black press, but there is not much in-depth research. Oak[29] made an effort at studying the business of the press when he devoted the first volume of a series of studies of the black press to "the Negro Entrepreneur." This study of the *Oklahoma Eagle* is to take another look at the problems and the opportunities involved in operating a black newspaper. It is an effort to name the factors that have caused one long-lasting paper to survive.

History

The roots of the *Oklahoma Eagle* go back to the Daily Tulsa Star, founded in 1913 by Andrew J. Smitherman.[30] Smitherman was a civil rights leader, attorney and Justice of the Peace. He built the paper to a respected publication, but in 1921, his Star disappeared.

On June 1, 1921 a 19-year-old black man was arrested for assualting a white woman. It was later reported that he stumbled and accidentally stepped on her foot.[31] Armed blacks and whites confronted each other at the

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[23]Duster, Alfreda M. ed. Crusade for Justice: The Autobiography of Ida B. Wells. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1970.

[24]Fox, Stephen R. The Guardian of Boston: William Monroe Trotter. New York: Atheneum, 1970.

[25]Thornbrough, Emma Lou. T. Thomas Fortune: Militant Black Journalist. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972.

[26]Ottley, Roi. The Lonely Warrior: The Life and Times of Robert S. Abbott. Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1955.

[27]Ammons, Linda; Dimmick, John; and Pilotta, Joseph. "Crime News Reporting in a Black Weekly," Journalism Quarterly, 59: 310-13 (1982).

[28]Seeman, Howard L., "Keeping the Gates at the Chicago Defender," Journalism Quarterly, 48: 275-78 (1971).

[29]Oak, Ibid.

[30]Troupe, Marilyn Kay. "The Voice of the People," unpublished research report, Oklahoma State University, November 25, 1976; also printed in the *Oklahoma Eagle's* 60th anniversary issue, November 2, 1978, p.C5.

[31]Halliburton, R. Jr., The Tulsa Race War of 1921. San Francisco: Northeastern Oklahoma State University, 1975, p.6.

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courthouse and a race war followed. By the time the National Guard restored order at least 21 blacks and nine whites were dead.[32] The death toll was probably much higher when others are included, such as those who went out of town for treatment and babies who died from premature birth. In addition to the human losses, the black community, which had included a prosperous business district, was destroyed. Halliburton wrote:

> Between thirty and forty blocks had succumbed to the torch. No less than (1,150) residences had been destroyed. Another (314) homes had been looted but not burned. Fire, pillage and vandalism had obliterated the black business section. Property losses can only be estimated, but were probably between (2 and 3) million dollars.[33]

Smitherman's paper was destroyed , as was his home. Like many others, he left Tulsa. He went to Buffalo, N.Y. and started the Empire Star which lasted until 1961, shortly after his death.[34]

Troupe reports that after the riot, Theodore Baughman, a black businessman, purchased the salvaged equipment of the Star from Smitherman, and started a newspaper the he named the *Oklahoma Eagle*. (The *Eagle* staff celebrated the papers 60th anniversary in 1978 and claims 1918 as its founding date. The year of founding was first listed in Ayer as 1922, then 1920.) "Baughman supplemented his income by operating a sub-post office" [35] and by selling almanacs and out-of-state black newspapers. The *Eagle* was not a financial success. After trying to continue the paper, Baughman sold it in 1936. He died a year later.

Although the purchase was disputed, by 1938 the *Eagle* was owned and operated by Edward Lawrence Goodwin. Goodwin's parents moved from Water Valley, Mississippi to Tulsa when he was seven years old. His father, James Henri Goodwin, prospered as a mortician and through the purchase of real estate.[36]

Ed Goodwin finished high school in Tulsa, then attended Fisk University, where he earned the bachelors degree in business. He returned to Tulsa with his wife, Jeanne, and she became a teacher; he went into

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[32]Halliburton, Ibid., p.19. Also Franklin, John Hope. From Slavery to Freedom (Fifth Edition). New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1980, p.349.

[33]Halliburton, Ibid. pp.19-20.

[34]Interview with Mrs. Jeanne Goodwin, March 7, 1986.

[35]Troupe, op cit.

[36]Interview with Jeanne Goodwin Arradondo, March 18, 1986.

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business. Goodwin, who had operated a business in St. Louis, opened a shoe shine parlor in Tulsa that enabled him to get to know some of the white businessmen. His creative and generally successful business ventures that followed included fight promotions, real estate, bookmaking, and liquor sales. In later years he worked for the state as "business manager of the Negro Institutions (the hospital for the insane, training school for girls, and the home for the deaf, blind and orphaned) at Taft."[37] In the 1950's when the University of Tulsa was desegregated, Goodwin entered law school. He was admitted to the Oklahoma bar in 1960 at the age of 58.

Although involved in various ventures, Goodwin approached the *Eagle* as a business, as well as a platform for expression. He sought qualified personnel. In the early 1950s the paper was edited by Edgar T. Rouzeau, who was described as a former writer for the New York Herald Tribune. Edwyna Goodwin Anderson, the oldest of Ed and Jeanne Goodwin's eight children, recalled Rouzeau as an asset to the paper. She said he left because Goodwin refused to sell him part-ownership of the paper.[38] Anderson also edited the paper before moving to Michigan, where she is now Public Service Commissioner.

During the 1950's, several journalists who became prominent crossed the *Eagle's* path. Ethel Payne, who was the Washington correspondent for Sengstacke newspapers, wrote that Goodwin, indirectly, assisted her in gaining the Washington job. In Perspectives of the Black Press, she wrote:

> While I was on a swing through the South, I stopped in Tulsa, Okla. Ed. Goodwin, the publisher of the *Oklahoma Eagle*, was looking for an editor. He thought I could fill the bill. After a long discussion, to show his good faith, he had Amos Hall, his attorney, draw up a contract giving me 49 percent of the stock and an agreement that as the paper grew I would share in a larger percentage of profits.
>
> It was an impressive looking document, complete with a gold seal.[39]

Payne said she took the contract to Chicago and waved it in the face of Louis Martin, editor-in-chief of the Chicago Defender. Martin belittled the document and offered her the position of Washington correspondent for

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[37]"History of Eagle Existence Cited on Eve of F. Opening," *Oklahoma Eagle*, April 14, 1966, p.2-A.

[38]Interview with Edwyna Goodwin Anderson, March 15, 1986.

[39]"Loneliness in the Capital: The Black National Correspondent," by Ethel Payne, in LaBrie, Henry G. III. Perspectives on the Black Press:1974. Kennebunkport, Maine: Mercer House Press, 1974, p.153.

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six months. She stayed in the position over 20 years. Payne recalled Goodwin as a "dominating...well-meaning man" who wanted to build a respectable paper.[40]

About a year after Payne visited Tulsa, Thelma Thurston Gorham became editor of the *Eagle*. Gorham recalled her tenure as 1954-1955.[41] While editing the paper, she wrote a series of front page editorials on integration, using the theme, "Are We Ready?" The series won an award from the National Council of Christians and Jews "and earned national recognition for the *Eagle*."[42] Gorham's career in journalism has included serving as executive editor of the Oklahoma City Black Dispatch, serving on the faculty of the Langston University School of Journalism, working with the St. Louis Argus, and publishing scholarly articles. She is currently on the journalism faculty at Florida A&M University.

In 1955 the *Eagle* staff also included a young man who had worked for the Associated Negro Press. Virgil Overbea wrote Goodwin seeking a job as managing editor. He said Goodwin had seen his work, and therefore hired him. But when he arrived, he discovered Gorham was already managing editor, and he became city editor. He said he stayed with the paper from July 1955 to September 1956. Later he worked for a daily paper in Winston Salem, N.C., becoming one of the first blacks on a southern daily. He was managing editor for the St. Louis Sentinnel and assistant make-up editor for the St. Louis Globe-Democrat, before joining the Christian Science Monitor, where he is a staff writer.[43]

Before Overbea left the *Eagle*, he and Gorham were joined by one of her former Langston students, Eddie L. Madison Jr. Madison had worked at the newspaper as a high school news boy. He continued working periodically while attending college and before entering the Army. After the service he returned to the paper and became editor. Madison recalled the paper had a headline that said, "News Boy Becomes Editor."[44] Madison was editor until 1959. He said he left because he wanted new challenges, and being editor of the *Eagle* was as high as a black person could go in journalism in Tulsa at that time. In the years that followed he worked as a reporter or editor of the Chicago Defender, Associated Negro Press and Chicago Tribune. Later he worked at the U.S. Department of Commerce Publications Office, and the Washington Evening Star Broadcasting Co.

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[40]Interview with Ethel Payne, February 14, 1986.

[41]Interview with Thelma Gorham, March 20, 1986.

[42]Carter, L. Edward. The Story of Oklahoma Newspapers. Oklahoma Heritage Associaton, Western Heritage Books, Inc., 1984, p.189.

[43]Interview with Virgil Overbea, June 23, 1986.

[44]Interview with Eddie L. Madison Jr., March 20, 1986.

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At least one other noted journalist was associated with the *Eagle*. Carmen Fields, a Nieman Fellow at Harvard this year, recalled that her interest in journalism developed because Jeanne Goodwin offered her opportunities to write for the *Eagle*.[45] Jeanne Goodwin wrote a social column, "Scoopin' the Scoop!" for over 30 years. Sometimes when she took vacations, she invited Fields, then a high school journalism student, to write the column for her. Fields has since been assistant city editor of the Boston Globe and reporter for WNEV-TV in Boston.

Others have been influenced by and an asset to the *Eagle*. For twenty years, 1951-1971, Ben Hill served as an editorial page editor for the *Eagle*. He was recognized as "one of the city's leading and most knowledgeable citizens."[46] Hill was pastor of Vernon AME Church for 20 years before being elected as a state representative from Tulsa. He was also national editor of the AME Church Review, a journal. Of Hill, Franklin wrote:

> Hill...wrote a column for the *Tulsa Eagle*. He used this paper effectively to acquaint black people with significant local and state issues as well as national developments that affected their lives. His careful reasoning often left both black militants and white racists uncomfortable. He advised whites to stop talking to themselves and to confront the reality of a racist society, and he scolded those blacks who demanded equal opportunity without stressing equal responsibilities.[47]

During the 1970s and early 80s David Breed served as city editor, then managing editor. Breed is one of several white journalists who worked for the paper. He recalled his tenure as a time of adjustment for the *Eagle* as urban renewal caused residents all around the paper's plant to move miles away. He said the residential changes caused major circulation problems for the paper, and increased the use of mailed subscriptions.[48] During his time at the newspaper, the *Eagle* continued to win awards, including some from the National Council of Christian and Jews, and the National Newspaper Publishers Association.

All the Goodwin children worked on the paper, starting as paper carriers when they were young. All three sons served as editor or publisher.

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[45]Interview with Carmen Fields, March 20, 1986.

[46]Franklin, Jimmie Lewis. Journey Toward Hope. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1982, p.183.

[47]Franklin, Ibid., p.200.

[48]Interview with David Breed, March 22, 1986.

E.L. Goodwin Jr., now managing editor, studied journalism and graphics at Kansas State Teacher's College and has been at the paper longer than any of his siblings. He was listed as editor in 1962, then vice president in 1966. E.L. said the paper was instrumental in bringing news of the civil rights sit-ins to the Tulsa area, and in gaining desegregation of employee facilities in major downtown Tulsa hotels. Five years after separate facilities had been outlawed, the hotels still maintained racially separate restrooms for employees, E.L. said. The *Eagle* ran photo essays to protest the practice, which was stopped.[49]

Robert Kerr Goodwin, the youngest son, was named publisher of the paper in 1973, when he was 24 years old. Robert is an ordained minister with a bachelor's degree in sociology from Oral Roberts University and a masters in Christian ethics from the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, Calif. He is now co-publisher of the *Eagle* and director of public information for Prarie View A&M University in Texas.

James O. Goodwin, a Notre Dame University graduate and a lawyer, was named president and legal counsel of the paper in 1978. He is now co-publisher and combines running the paper with practicing law.

Of the daughters, Edwyna, who was previously mentioned, and Carlie Goodwin contributed most to the editorial section of the paper. Carlie wrote a column and helped organize the Muskogee and Lawton editions, prior to her death. Another daughter, Jeanne, wrote articles and a column; JoAnn contributed poems and provided administrative assistance, and Oneitha also provide administrative.

The masthead of the paper, occasional articles about the staff and comments by the Goodwins reveal others who have worked at the paper for years and been important to the paper's operation. They include Alquita Goodwin, business manager; Lee Turpin , advertising manager; Bobby Green, production chief; and James (Red) Williams, plant assistant.

PRESENT STATUS

Reviewing copies of the *Eagle* from over the last nine years, one can see certain constants. The newspaper was usually neat and well edited. Issues, particularly in the late 70's had many ads and several large ads. Generally the paper provided significant news. In July 1977 writer Polly Bowen produced an investigative story on prison reform.[50] In December 1978 Casey Hamilton wrote a series on teenage pregnacies. A front page photo-stories package on April 16, 1981 combined the announcement of

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[49]Interview with E.L. Goodwin Jr., June 13, 1986.

[50]Bowen, Polly. "*Eagle* Investigates Prison System," *Oklahoma Eagle*, July 21, 1977, p.1.

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boxer Joe Louis' death with James Goodwin's editorial on memories of Louis, and the need to remember black heroes.

The newspaper regularly carried national and international news affecting blacks. Activities of the National Newspaper Publishers Association, as well as news on groups such as the Urban League and NAACP were often carried. Much of the space on inside pages between front page news and sports, was occupied by social news, with an emphasis on local achievers, and church news. But there were also city pages, and an editorial page. And there was variety. Tabloids inserted in the paper included a local employment publication and "Dawn" magazine, a black news and entertainment publication.

The March 13, 1986 issue of the Eagle retains many of the qualities of the paper over the years. The top of page one features a photo-story package of a Tulsan who is part of the Ebony Fashion Fair. There is a lead story on voter registration for an upcoming city election and a sidebar warning that the ballot will be "looong." Page 2 is the "Second Front Page" and the right two columns of page 3 are dominated, as they have been for years, by "Scoopin' the Scoop!" As usual the column is signed in 24 point, bold type by Ann Brown, Jeanne Goodwin's pen name. The column is now usually written by Vivian Goodwin.

Many of the rest of the full-sized, six column pages are dominated by announcements and ads, as well as some church, entertainment and sports news. One of the best written pieces is a page 13 column slugged "The party's over..." It is a regular column by a staffer who is recovering from alcoholism. This week's subtopic, "Vote for me!", is not an election bid, but a plea for voters to vote, because the writer cannot vote. Legal charges for driving under the influence of liquor have caused him to lose his right to vote.

The issue ends on page 16 with the editorial page. The lead editorial is "How to win the black vote," and it is boxed with two related cartoons. The rest of the page includes a column by Marian Wright Edleman on fighting teen pregnancy, and other pieces related to the local election.

In many ways the issue is similar to past issues, but things are changing at the Eagle. E.L. Goodwin,Sr. died in 1978 and the family had to reorganize. Plans for continued management of the paper were altered because of illness, burn-out, and the lure of other careers. In the 1978 anniversary edition the editors boasted of having one of only 12 black newspapers that owned all its own publishing equipment.[51] But now the presses have been sold, as the publishers decided the cost could not be

[51] "Eagle 'soars' - 114-page edition marks 60th birthday of black newspaper," Tulsa Tribune, November 3, 1978.

justified.[52] The newspaper plant now produces camera-ready copy. In the 1970's the paper called itself "the fastest growing black paper in the Southwest" with a circulation of 13,000. Recent reports list the circulation as 12,000. Family members and former employees indicate that in recent years the paper has not been profitable. But the paper continues.

SURVIVAL

How has the Eagle managed to survive so long?

"Barely," Jeanne Goodwin is quick to respond. She explained that it hasn't been easy. There are at least five factors that have contibuted to the paper's longevity.

(1) Quality staffers - The newspaper seems to have had good staffers over the years. As previously indicated, some very good journalists worked for the paper and helped establish it as a sound publication. Virgil Overbea mentioned the conflict that publishers face: whether to devote resources to material or personnel. E.L. Goodwin purchased high quality printing equipment, but he did not neglect hiring good staffers. The paper has been aided by staffers who have remained with the paper.

(2) Advertising success - Shortly after E.L. Goodwin bought the paper Lee Turpin joined the staff as advertising manager. He is credited with bringing in the many ads that filled the paper. Large, frequent advertisers included Sears and local grocery stores. One import advertiser for over 30 years came from an idea by Jeanne Goodwin. She convinced Froug's, a Tulsa department store, to sponsor the social column, "Scoopin the Scoop!" For three decades the store paid for 40 column inches "on the rail" of page three in each issue.

In addition to having a good advertising manager, the paper had good relations with the advertisers. Gorham suggested that the city's history of violence against blacks might have made advertisers a little more tolerant of a black newspaper. She said it appeared that the *Eagle* did not suffer the kind of direct pressure on advertisers by the white media that has hurt many other black papers. Robert Goodwin, however, is quick to note that the paper has not gotten the kind of support from advertisers that would match black econmic strength in the area.

(3) Size of community - With a black population of about 45,000 to 50,000, Tulsa offers a market large enough to attract advertisers, but not large enough to encourage competition, Robert Goodwin said. Although there have been attempts by other black papers over the years, none has survived. Ayer lists only one other black paper in Tulsa since the *Eagle* began publishing, and it lasted only a few years.

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[52]Interview with Robert K. Goodwin, March 14, 1986.

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(4) Sound relations with the community - The paper claims to be "the voice of the people" and the claim seems to be accepted. Robert Goodwin stressed the importance of the editors serving on boards and participating in community activities. He said that even during the tension of radical periods, community leaders could talk with the editors of the paper and know where they stood. The paper has seemed to provide a forum for various segments, including militants and white leaders.

(5)Family Commitment - Throughout its 68 years, the paper has survived largely because the owners have been committed ot it, and the Goodwins have had the resources to support it when it faltered. They have put into it time and money. Jeanne Goodwin noted that soon after the paper was purchased, her father-in-law, James H. Goodwin, assisted in financing it. He also helped manage it while E.L. Goodwin worked for the state. In the years that followed the children gave the paper time, while prospering in their careers. Jeanne Goodwin said:

> After 1979 we had some reverses, but by the grace of God we have been able to survive. We're now beginning to see the light...It has been a family labor...just sheer drive... and maybe we've been too persistent. Maybe we should have let it go. But when you have a dream, you just keep on keeping on.

FUTURE

The *Eagle*'s' place in history is secure. It is listed in newspaper directories and other literature. Back issues are stored on microfilm at Howard University and in the Oklahoma Archives. At E.L. Goodwin's death the Tulsa World, in an editorial, credited him with playing a large part in "racial progress in Tulsa and Oklahoma during the past 40 years." [53] Television station, KTEW, Channel 2, in Tulsa broadcast an editorial calling Goodwin "the great voice of moderation" and "publisher of one of the great black papers in the country."[54] Goodwin was inducted, posthumously, in the Oklahoma Journalism Hall of Fame in 1980. Now a drive is underway by a community group to restore the former black community by building a Greenwood Cultural Center. The center would feature the Mabel B. Little Heritage Museum and the E.L. Goodwin Auditorium.

The past is secure, but what about the future of the *Eagle*? The answer is simple for James O. Goodwin. It will survive he said. It will survive under the ownership of the Goodwin family. At least three of E.L..

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[53]"Edward L. Goodwin," Tulsa World, September 13, 1978, p. 6-A.

[54]Jack Morris, commentator, KTEW-TV, Channel 2, Tulsa (copy undated).

Goodwin's grandchildren have studied journalism, and one expresses an interest in continuing the newspaper.

James Goodwin gave another reason why the paper will continue. He said:

> The paper will survive because of the purpose it serves. When I came to this position (as publisher) five years ago, I tried to find the purpose of the paper. The black press is still an alternative. It still talks about issues that are not addressed by metropolitan media. Its mission is as relevant today as in the days of Freedom's Journal.[55]

CONCLUSIONS

In 1948 Vishnu Oak wrote that the majority of early black newspapers were one-man operations, printed for the most part in white shops, and usually terminated when the owner died. The *Oklahoma Eagle* is not of that mold. Its major influence, Edward L. Goodwin, was a businessman who reached out to bring in talented journalists. The paper also benefited from advertising success, good location, good community relations and dedication of the **owners.** But now the *Eagle* is at a delicate point. Eight years have passed since the death of E.L. Goodwin. The family-owners have undertaken changes, but have yet to find solid management footing.

The problems of the *Eagle* are typical of the black press today. Perhaps the paper has succeeded longer than most, because of greater dedication. For now, when Thursday comes to Tulsa, so does a familiar publication. In the left ear is a drawing of a scroll bearing a quote from E.L. Goodwin,Sr., "We make America better when we aid our people." In the right ear an eagle flies over Oklahoma.

[55]Interview with James Goodwin, March 21, 1986.

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